

What is claimed is:

1 1. A tele-inventory system for inventorying
2 various kinds of commodities in a shop by an operator
3 from a remote management apparatus that is installed
4 remotely from the shop, comprising:

5 at the shop

6 camera means for taking images of object
7 commodities to be inventoried;

8 image-transmitter means for transmitting said
9 taken images of the object commodities to the remote
10 management apparatus;

11 at the remote management apparatus

12 image-receiver means for receiving said taken
13 images of the object commodities from said
14 image-transmitter means; and

15 display means for displaying said taken images
16 of the object commodities which images have been
17 received by said image-receiver means, whereby the
18 operator is able to make an inventory of the object
19 commodities at the remote management apparatus with
20 consulting said taken images of the object
21 commodities which images have been displayed on said
22 display means.

1 2. A tele-inventory system according to claim
2 1, further comprising:

3 at the remote management apparatus
4 instruction-transmitter means for
5 transmitting instructions of the operator to the
6 shop; and
7 at the shop
8 instruction-receiver means for receiving said
9 instructions of the operator from the remote
10 management apparatus.

1 3. A tele-inventory system according to claim
2 2, further comprising:
3 at the shop
4 camera control means for controlling said
5 camera means based on said instructions of the
6 operator, which have been received by said
7 instruction-receiver means.

1 4. A tele-inventory system according to claim
2 3, further comprising:
3 at the shop
4 manipulator means for manipulating a posture
5 and a position of the individual object commodity;
6 and
7 manipulator controlling means for controlling
8 said manipulator means based on said instructions
9 of the operator, which have been received by said
10 instruction-receiver means.

1 5. A tel -inventory system according to claim
2 3, furth r comprising:
3 at th shop
4 a database for previously storing commodity
5 information about a correlation between the
6 individual object commodity and position
7 information about a position of the individual
8 object commodity; and
9 said camera control means being operable, based
10 on said instructions received by said
11 instruction-receiver means, to read, from said
12 database, commodity information with respect to the
13 individual object commodity contained in said
14 instructions, and to control said camera means in
15 such a manner that said camera means takes an image
16 of the last-named individual object commodity.

1 6. A tele-inventory system according to claim
2 1, further comprising:
3 at the remote management apparatus
4 pointer means for pointing the individual
5 object commodity in said taken images of the object
6 commodities which images have been displayed on said
7 display means; and
8 marker means for labeling said taken image of
9 the individual object commodity, which image has
10 been pointed by said pointing device, with a

11 pr det rmined mark.

1 7. A tele-inventory system according to claim
2 6, further comprising:

3 at the remote management apparatus
4 counter means for counting the number of images
5 of the object commodities which have been labeled
6 with the predetermined marks by said marker means

1 8. A tele-inventory system according to claim
2 2, further comprising:

3 at the remote management apparatus
4 pointer means for pointing a particular object
5 commodity in said taken images of the object
6 commodities which images have been displayed on said
7 display means; and
8 marker means for labeling said taken image of
9 said particular object commodity, which image has
10 been pointed by said pointer means, with a
11 predetermined special mark.

1 9. A tele-inventory system according to claim
2 8, further comprising:

3 at the shop
4 in-shop display means for displaying a marked
5 image, which is the image labeled with said
6 predetermined special mark by said marker means and

7 which has been received together with instructions
8 of the operator by said instruction-receiver means
9 of the shop from said instruction-transmitter means
10 of the remote management apparatus, so that a sales
11 clerk of the shop sees said marked image to make
12 arrangements for various processes based on the
13 last-named instructions of the operator.

1 10. A tele-inventory system according to
2 claim 1, wherein said camera means serves also as
3 a security camera, which is usually previously
4 installed in the shop.

1 11. A tele-inventory system according to
2 claim 1, wherein the remote management apparatus
3 is a mobile information processing terminal to be
4 operated by the operator.

1 12. A tele-inventory system according to claim
2 1, wherein the remote management apparatus is
3 installed at a remote place in a different time zone
4 from the time zone of a shop place where the shop
5 is located.

1 13. A tele-inventory system according to
2 claim 5, wherein:
3 said image-transmitter means and said

4 instruction-rec iving means are communicably
5 connected to a plurality of customer information
6 terminals to be operated by individual customers
7 of the shop;

8 upon receipt of a direction containing the name
9 of a target commodity from the individual customer
10 information terminal,

11 at the shop

12 said camera control means reads, from said
13 database, commodity information with respect to the
14 individual object commodity corresponding to the
15 target commodity contained in the direction of the
16 individual customer based on the direction, and
17 controls said camera means in such a manner that
18 said camera means takes an image of the target
19 commodity; and

20 said image-transmitter means transmits the
21 last-named taken image of the target commodity taken
22 by said camera means to the last-named customer
23 information terminal.

1 14. An in-shop terminal for use in a
2 tele-inventory system in which various kinds of
3 commodities in a shop are inventoried by an operator
4 from a remote management apparatus that is installed
5 remotely from the shop, there being installed at
6 the shop camera means for taking images of object

7 commodities in the shop, comprising:

8 imag -transmitter means for transmitting the
9 images of obj ct commodities, which images have been
10 taken by the camera means at the shop, to the remote
11 management apparatus;

12 instruction-receiver means for receiving
13 instructions of the operator from the remote
14 management apparatus; and

15 camera control means for controlling the camera
16 means based on said instructions of the operator
17 from the remote management apparatus which
18 instructions have been received by said receiving
19 means.

1 15. An in-shop terminal according to claim 14,
2 further comprising manipulator controlling means
3 for controlling, based on said operator's
4 instructions received by said instruction-receiver
5 means, manipulator means installed in the shop and
6 operable to manipulate a posture and a position of
7 the individual object commodity.

1 16. An in-shop terminal according to claim 15,
2 further comprising:
3 a database for previously storing commodity
4 information about a correlation between the
5 individual object commodity and position

6 information about the position of th last-named
7 individual obj ct commodity; and

8 said camera control means being operable, based
9 on said operator's instructions received by said
10 instruction-receiver means, to read commodity
11 information with respect to the individual object
12 commodity contained in the operator's instructions,
13 from said database, and to control the camera means
14 in such a manner that the camera means takes an image
15 of the last-named individual object commodity.

1 17. An in-shop terminal according to claim 14,
2 further comprising an in-shop display means for
3 displaying a marked image which has been returned
4 by the remote management apparatus and which has
5 been received by said instruction-receiver means.

1 18. An in-shop terminal according to claim 16,
2 wherein:

3 said image-transmitter means and said
4 instruction-transmitter means are communicably
5 connected to a plurality of customer information
6 terminals to be operated by individual customers
7 of the shop;

8 upon receipt of a direction containing the name
9 of a target commodity from the individual customer
10 information terminal,

11 said cam ra control means reads, from said
12 databas , commodity information with respect to the
13 individual obj ct commodity corresponding to the
14 target commodity contained in the direction of the
15 individual customer based on said customer's
16 direction, and controls the camera means of the shop
17 in such a manner that the camera means takes an image
18 of the target commodity; and
19 said image-transmitter means transmits the
20 image of the target commodity, which image has been
21 taken by the camera means of the shop, to the
22 last-named customer information terminal.

1 19. A remote management apparatus for use in
2 a tele-inventory system in which various kinds of
3 commodities in a shop are inventoried by an operator
4 from said remote management apparatus, there being
5 at the shop camera means for taking images of object
6 commodities and image-transmitter means for
7 transmitting the taken images of the object
8 commodities to said remote management apparatus,
9 comprising:

10 image-receiver means for receiving the images
11 of the object commodities, which images have been
12 taken by the camera means of the shop, from the
13 image-transmitter means of the shop;
14 display means for displaying the taken images

15 of the object commodities which images have been
16 received by said image-receiver means; and
17 instruction-transmitter means for
18 transmitting instructions of the operator, which
19 are for making an inventory of the object commodities
20 in the shop, to the shop.

1 20. A remote management apparatus according
2 to claim 19, further comprising:
3 pointer means for pointing the individual
4 object commodity in the taken images of the object
5 commodities which images have been displayed on said
6 display means; and
7 marker means for labeling the taken image of
8 the individual object commodity, which image has
9 been pointed by said pointer means, with a
10 predetermined mark.

1 21. A remote management apparatus according
2 to claim 20, further comprising counter means for
3 counting the number of images of the object
4 commodities which images each have been labeled with
5 said predetermined mark by said marker means.

1 22. A remote management apparatus according
2 to claim 19, further comprising:
3 pointer means for pointing a particular object

4 commodity in the taken image of the object
5 commodities which images have been displayed on said
6 display means; and
7 marker means for labeling the taken image of
8 said particular object commodity, which image has
9 been pointed by said pointer means, with a
10 predetermined special mark

1 23. A remote management apparatus according
2 to claim 22, wherein the marked image, which is the
3 image labeled with said predetermined special mark
4 by said marker means, is returned to the shop together
5 with instructions of the operator.